

Dear City of Memphis Plan Participants:

Spring is in the air! As you roll up your sleeves and begin to prioritize your spring cleaning chores, why not start with yourself? Beginning April 1 through May 8, the Division of Human Resources is sponsoring the 2nd Annual Health Fair. This year, you can look forward to receiving the same courteous and prompt attention as last year, while you receive screenings for everything from cholesterol and glucose to checks for blood pressure and cardiac risk profiles.

We encourage all employees to attend as most of the services offered during the Health Fair will be free of charge, and no screening will cost more than \$15. There will be experts on-hand to answer any health questions that you may have, and no Health Fair would be complete without refreshments and giveaways!

The Health Fair will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. on the dates specified for each division.

Participants who complete all screenings will receive a raffle ticket and will be eligible to win \$150 cash at each health fair.

Please contact Rolandria Dunlap, the Wellness Coordinator with the City of Memphis for more information. She can be reached at (901) 576-6460, or e-mail her at rolandria.dunlap@cityofmemphis.org.



Division	Date	Where
Park Services & Satellites	April 15, 2003	3910 Ridgeway St.
All Other Divisions	April 30, 2003	125 N. Main St. (Lobby)
Public Works	May 6, 2003	3207 Farrisview Rd.
	May 7, 2003	1514 North Bellevue
	May 8, 2003	309 Scott St.

Overview



Increase Your Awareness

From now until the end of the year, the City of Memphis has launched a Health Awareness Campaign dedicated to providing employees and their dependents with comprehensive information and educational tools that will help facilitate increased health awareness overall.

This issue of *HealthConnect* will provide information on programs and plan benefits that you can utilize in order to help prevent potential health care concerns.

We encourage you to take advantage of *HealthConnect*, as each issue is made specifically with you in mind. You will notice that each issue will provide information that you can apply to everyday situations, in a format that is easy to understand.



Choosing a Physician Who Fits

It is important to choose your doctor with care, because your primary care doctor's actions (or lack thereof) will do more to determine the adequacy of your health care than those of any other doctor you may see.

Finding the right doctor you can trust and feel comfortable with can seem like a taxing job. However, developing a connection with a physician who has an idea of your values and desires is one of the most important decisions you will have to make. To get you started on finding the perfect fit, here are a few suggestions:

Get a list. If you are currently enrolled with the City's PPO or POS plan, you should have received a list of doctors who practice within the network. Contact the Benefit Administrator's Office at (901) 576-6761 if you need additional copies or if you are interested in enrolling in the City's plan. If you are on your own, you can narrow down your list by asking family and friends, checking with a local hospital or public health nurse, or contacting the nearest county medical association.

Check credentials. Check out credentials and licensure. This can be done for free at www.sanctionsearch.com or by calling the American Board of Medical Specialists at 1-800-776-CERT. You can find out if the doctor is certified in the specialized areas he indicates.

Talk to the doctor's receptionist. Your impression of the receptionist and other staff is important. It often reflects the attitude of the doctors.

Check out the office. The facilities should be clean and pleasant. Patients should not be kept waiting for long periods of time. The staff, including the doctor, should be pleasant and professional. You should be greeted in a friendly and respectful manner.

Interview the doctor. Interviewing the doctor might be the only way to find out if this is someone you can work with. During the interview, you may want to find out how the doctor keeps up with the latest developments in the field, what the office hours are, how long it takes to get a routine appointment, how long is the office wait to see the doctor, what happens if you have to cancel an appointment, does the office send reminders about preventative exams, and what you should do for health care if he or she is not available. If after the interview, you feel uncomfortable or unsure, don't hesitate to interview another doctor.

Trust your feelings. Someone can technically be a very good doctor, but if you are not comfortable with that person and don't think you can work with them, then he or she might not be the best doctor for you. If things are not explained in terms that you can understand, or you don't feel comfortable asking questions and sharing personal information, continue your search until you find the doctor who fits.

Follow these steps until you find someone you are comfortable with. Remember that doctors provide a service and you are a consumer. If you are not happy with the service, find another provider. **DO NOT ACCEPT SECOND-RATE CARE**, just like you wouldn't accept second-rate service anywhere else.

Did you know that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that over half of all premature deaths in adults in the United States are from lifestyle-related causes? This fact indicates that we ultimately have control over our own health status.

Know About Your Health

The City of Memphis recognizes the importance and value of healthy lifestyles within its workforce. To this end, the City encourages all employees and their dependents to practice health promotion and wellness-related behaviors in support of good health. To support this endeavor, the Department of Human Resources is sponsoring the 2nd Annual Health Fair running from April 1 through May 8.

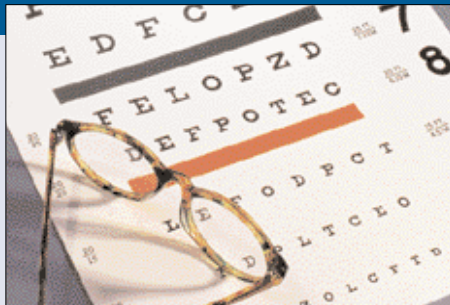
If these dates pose an inconvenience for you, you can still take a proactive approach to knowing your health status by scheduling an appointment with your primary care physician for an annual exam at your convenience. The existing City of Memphis health plan includes a wellness benefit for eligible employees and family members. Individuals are encouraged to utilize health assessment and screening services that are generally covered under the wellness benefit provision.

...engage in regular, physical, mental, and spiritual activities that support healthy lifestyles

Did you know that under your wellness benefit, if using an in-network provider, you are eligible to receive up to \$250 in wellness benefits per covered family member per calendar year, after paying only a \$10 copay? The wellness benefit covers preventative testing, such as Pap tests, mammograms, prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood tests, as well as immunizations.

To further support gaining control and getting connected to your personal health, the City would like to encourage you to engage in regular, physical, mental, and spiritual activities that support healthy lifestyles. Additionally, you can read your benefits book to find out what other excellent benefits you are entitled to under the POS and PPO plans.

Just for Retirees



Protecting Your Sight

Many older people have good eyesight into their 80's and beyond—growing older does not always mean you see poorly. But many seniors do have some trouble with reduced vision. Here are some tips to protect your sight into your senior years:

- See your doctor regularly to check for diseases like diabetes, which can lead to a condition known as macular degeneration, which may cause blindness.
- Having a complete eye exam every one or two years. Most eye diseases can be treated when they are found early. The eye doctor should test your eyesight, your glasses, and your eye muscles, and also test for glaucoma.
- See an eye doctor at once if you have any loss or dimness of eyesight, eye pain, fluids coming from the eye, double vision, redness, or swelling of your eye or eyelid.

Preserving Your Hearing

About one-third of Americans older than age 60 have hearing problems. You may want to talk to your doctor about hearing loss if you:

- Have trouble hearing over the telephone.
- Find it hard to follow conversations when two or more people are talking.
- Need to turn up the TV volume so loud that others complain.
- Have a problem hearing because of background noise.
- Sense that others seem to mumble.
- Can't understand when women and children speak to you.

Hearing loss can have many different causes, including wax buildup, exposure to very loud noises, infections, heart conditions, head injuries, tumors, and even certain medicines. A family history of hearing loss may indicate a greater risk for you.



Kids' Corner

Keys to Raising Healthy Kids: Family Fitness

You've heard it before: Children learn by example. By combining fitness with family activities, parents and youngsters can share in a great time, do a fair amount of bonding, and get—or stay—in great shape. And you'll be helping your children form a healthy habit that can last a lifetime. Since schools generally do not provide adequate physical activity time for our children, it's up to us as parents to do so. Want to get started?

Schedule Family Fitness Activities

Children of physically active parents are six times more likely to be active than children of sedentary parents. A simple way to get everybody involved is to schedule regular family activity time. Take turns picking an activity such as walking, bicycling, swimming, or taking an exercise class together at your local Y or community center.

Involve Everybody

Even toddlers can enjoy simple activities such as Follow-the-Leader or Simon Says. By about age 5, a child should be able to learn the fundamentals of throwing and catching, hitting a tennis ball, or kicking a soccer ball. Older kids can have fun teaching younger kids to play.

Make It Fun

Don't push children too hard, or you may turn them off of fitness. Remember, too, that

they may become tired before you do. Finally, think of fitness activities as anything that gets everyone up and moving. This includes sledding, dancing, gardening and yard work, bike riding, or table tennis, and fun backyard games such as Tag or Capture the Flag.

Keep Going!

Adults and children alike should try to get a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity at least 5 days a week. Children who exhibit good physical activity habits early can become active healthy adults. Adults who are physically active are less likely to be overweight, or to have heart disease, high blood pressure, and other diseases.

Here are more tips for encouraging fitness in your children:

1. Encourage your child to participate in physical activities, including sports.
2. Set limits on the time your child is allowed to spend watching TV. Instead, encourage trips to the playground, park, gym, or swimming pool.
3. Don't push kids to win, teach them to have fun.
4. Most importantly, be a positive role model — children learn from their parents. If they see that you are participating in healthy physical activities, they may begin to exhibit the same healthy behaviors.

Tattoos and Body Piercing

Skin tattoos and piercing of body parts (also called body modification) are popular with teenagers and even younger children. If you want to caution your children about these practices, here's some information that may help:

- Tattoos can lead to the transmission of infectious diseases.

- Body piercing also presents the risk of chronic infection and scarring.
- In Tennessee, commercial tattooing of a person under age 18 is a misdemeanor.
- Kids younger than age 17 may have body piercing only with the consent of the minor's parent or legal guardian.

Choosing an Herbal Remedy

When you explore the herbal section of your pharmacy—and read labels with names such as black cohosh, kava, and ginkgo biloba—the experience can be overwhelming. The current conception that herbs are a safer and healthier alternative to prescription drugs has made them a popular choice. But there is little information available to consumers about the effectiveness of herbal remedies or the effects of mixing them with prescription drugs.

As the *Harvard Women's Health Watch* advises, when herbs are as effective as drugs, it is because they are acting like drugs. An herb of this type often contains a similar chemical makeup to a prescription drug. Therefore, an overdose may occur if you are taking herbs and prescription drugs for the same symptoms.

It is important that you talk to your doctor before you take an herbal product, especially if you also are taking any drug—prescription or over-the-counter.

When considering whether to take an herbal product, you need to be a savvy consumer, just as you would before taking an over-the-counter medication. Before taking any herbal dietary supplement, do some research, consult your physician or pharmacist with any questions, and be aware of the following:

- **Safety standards.** Neither the manufacturer nor the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is required by law to evaluate the safety or efficacy of herbal supplements before they are sold. There also is no standardization in strength and dosage for herbal supplements.



- **Manufacturing standards.** Dietary supplements are not required to meet standards for purity and potency. There's no guarantee that the supplement you're buying is free of contaminants or even that it contains the specified herb.
- **Product claims.** The FDA prohibits manufacturers from making claims related to preventing or treating a disease. However, herbs can be promoted as favorably affecting the body's "structure or function." So, while a product cannot be advertised to "cure depression," its manufacturer can advertise that it "encourages emotional well-being."
- **Scientific backing.** Solid scientific evidence regarding the safety and effectiveness of most herbal products still is scant. Preliminary studies of some herbal products have shown some items to be potentially helpful. Others have been shown to pose serious risks.
- **Possible interactions and reactions.** Serious interactions between herbal remedies and prescription medications also can result. Since herbal supplements are not considered by law to be drugs, manufacturers are not required to print such risks on packaging.

From the desk of the *Benefit Officer...*



Better Health and Lower Costs

Better health care and lower costs are the ultimate goals during our Health Awareness Campaign. This campaign consists of several stages of development and implementation that will require the cooperation of every employee of the City, from the retirees to the employees in the Administration Office.

In order for us to be successful in meeting our objectives, we must work as a team and fully understand that each one of us shares a common goal of increasing the value of our health care benefits. One such way to ensure that we are taking a proactive role in the development of healthy behaviors is to participate in events, such as the Health Fair. Activities of this type help to screen for and identify preventable diseases. They additionally increase our awareness of the wellness services offered through the City, which help us to maintain a healthy lifestyle for ourselves and for our families.

There are some very simple steps that can be made in order to continue to do our part in making this health plan more beneficial to all parties involved. We can begin by taking greater advantage of our wellness benefit through our PPO and POS plans. An increase in benefit participation would help screen for potential health concerns and would indicate what physical areas, if any, need more attention. Additionally, as plan participants, we can continue to utilize the in-network providers whenever possible. This will help to lower the costs associated with using out-of-network providers and facilities, which ultimately results in greater cost savings to us all.

Please remember that the Benefits office is here to help increase your awareness of programs designed to enhance your overall health. One of our main objectives is to support your needs by offering ongoing assistance through facilitating educational interventions aimed at helping you meet your individual health goals.

Additionally, we are working hard to meet the customer service needs of our insured, while at the same time offering comprehensive services to all of our callers. We encourage and welcome you to contact the Benefits office whenever you have concerns about your health care benefits.

The information provided in this newsletter is not intended to be substituted for your doctor's care. Please consult with your primary care physician for recommendations tailored to your medical situation or personal circumstances prior to making a change in or beginning a new health program.